



2012 Adult Summer Reading List

Created by Library Media Specialists from Howard County Public School System and Librarians
from Howard County Library System



Autobiography/ Biography

Hillenbrand, Lauren. *Unbroken*.

2010. The author of *Seabiscuit* now brings us a biography of World War II

prisoner of war survivor Louis Zamperini (b. 1917). A track athlete at the 1936 Munich Olympics, Zamperini became a B-24 crewman in the U.S. Army Air Force. When his plane went down in the Pacific in 1943, he spent 47 days in a life raft, then was picked up by a Japanese ship and survived starvation and torture in labor camps. *Library Journal*

Massie, Robert K. *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman*. 2011. In the year 1745, Sophia Augusta

Fredericka, a German princess, was brought to Russia to be the bride of Peter III, who was destined to succeed his aunt, Empress Elizabeth, as absolute ruler of this vast northern kingdom. Like his prospective bride, Peter had been born and raised in Germany; unlike her, he revered all things German and hated all things Russian. This did not bode well for him or for the country. Meanwhile, Princess Sophie embraced the Russian Orthodox faith. Upon her conversion, she took the name Catherine. Eventually she became Empress of this vast and powerful nation. Robert K. Massie tells the story of her turbulent reign and even more turbulent life with verve and drive. An amazing story, offering yet more proof that fact can be more fantastic than fiction. *Roberta Rood*

Pegg, Simon. *Nerd Do Well*. 2010. The unique life story of one of Britain's most talented and inventive comedians, Simon Pegg, star of *Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz* and *Star Trek*. *Amazon.com*

Reisen, Harriet. *Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind Little Women*. 2009. In a fresh, modern take on the remarkable Louisa May Alcott, Harriet Reisen's vivid biography explores the author's life in the context of her works, many of which are to some extent autobiographical. Although Alcott secretly wrote pulp fiction, harbored radical abolitionist views, and served as a Civil War nurse, her novels went on to sell more copies than those of Herman Melville and Henry James. Stories and details culled from Alcott's journals, together with revealing letters to family, friends, and publishers, plus recollections of her famous contemporaries provide the basis for this lively account of the author's classic rags-to-riches tale. *Amazon.com*



Fiction

Addison, Corban. *A Walk Across the Sun*. 2011. Addison's debut is an

international thriller about the shadowy world of child trafficking. During the 2005 tsunami, sheltered Indian teenagers Ahalya and Sita are orphaned and fall through the cracks into the criminal underworld. As they struggle to comprehend their situation, attorney Thomas Clarke, halfway across the globe, faces a personal and professional crisis that sends him off to India to work as a lawyer for an international agency focused on sex trafficking. When a brothel raid nets Ahalya but not her sister, Thomas sets off on a personal quest to find the missing teenager. *Booklist*

Brashares, Ann. *My Name is Memory*. 2011. On the heels of recent film adaptations of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Brashares' second novel for adults taps into the growing appetite for romances thwarted by extraordinary tricks of time. Virginia high-school student Lucy is inexplicably drawn to classmate Daniel, but when he claims to have known her before, a thoroughly unsettled Lucy flees. Gradually, Lucy learns the impossible truth: Daniel has been chasing her through ages and lives for 1,200 years. In chapters that alternate viewpoints between the two lovers, past and present, the couples' unrequited desire builds, even as a murderous soul threatens their reunion. Steamy bedroom scenes aside, the coming-of-age sensibility will feel familiar to crossover adult fans of Brashares' best-selling *Traveling Pants* series for teens. *Booklist*

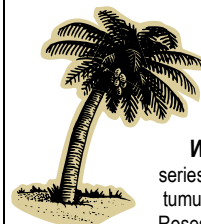
Cather, Willa. *The Professor's House*. 1925. On the face of it, Professor Godfrey St. Peter has a good life. He is married, with two grown daughters who are also married. He has for many years taught at a small college in Ohio, where he is respected and esteemed. With money from a literary prize, St. Peter has built his wife Lillian a grand new home. But there is a problem. He does not want to live there. He prefers the older house. More specifically, he prefers the top floor room that has served, for many years, as his study. This reluctance to move house is the outward manifestation of a profound inner crisis, whose nature becomes ever more urgent as events unfold. This novel is a spare and beautiful meditation on the fragility of happiness. *Roberta Rood*

Harkness, Deborah. *Discovery of Witches*. 2000. Young scholar Diana Bishop, a descendant in an old and distinguished line of witches, wants nothing to do with sorcery, but while doing research at Oxford's Bodleian Library, she unwittingly calls up a bewitched alchemical manuscript that causes a stirring in the underworld that only she can calm. *Publisher*

Ondaatje, Michael. *The Cat's Table*. 2011. In 1953, an 11-year-old boy's life is permanently upended when he leaves Colombo, Ceylon, to begin a new life in London with his mother. His 21 unsupervised days aboard the ocean liner Oronsay prove momentous as significant events during the crossing profoundly impact the boy's future while immensely expanding his world. Although seemingly at the periphery of society, seated at the so-called cat's table, the boy's dining mates an assortment of colorful characters are, in fact, a lot more instrumental in the ensuing intrigue aboard the ship than originally appears. *Booklist*

Patchett, Ann. *State of Wonder*. 2011. Marina Singh, a physician, is employed by a pharmaceutical research firm in Minnesota. This same firm had dispatched another scientist, Annick Swenson, to the Amazon to investigate a drug with tremendous, if somewhat mysterious, potential. Dr. Swenson disliked cell phones and was in general a poor communicator. When she hadn't been heard from for a disturbingly long time, Anders Eckman, Marina's research partner, was sent to search for her. Now Eckman is also gone. Marina has no choice but to go to Brazil herself and find out, once and for all, just what is happening with this project. What she eventually discovers shocks and amazes her. Neither as a woman nor as a scientist is she prepared for such mind bending revelations. *Roberta Rood*

Penny, Louise. *Still Life*. 2007. First book in a mystery series set in Three Pines, a fictitious Canadian village. Introduces Chief Inspector Armand Gamache who is both intelligent and kind. Great who-dunnit with wonderful characters. *Ellen Levin*



Historical Fiction

Gregory, Philippa. *The*

***White Queen*.** 2009. The first in a series, *The Cousins War*, is set amid the tumult and intrigue of *The War of the Roses*. Internationally bestselling author

Philippa Gregory brings this family drama to colourful life through its women, beginning with the story of Elizabeth Woodville, the *White Queen*. *The White Queen* tells the story of a common woman who ascends to royalty by virtue of her beauty, a woman who rises to the demands of her position and fights tenaciously for the success of her family, a woman whose two sons become the central figures in a mystery that has confounded historians for centuries: the Princes in the Tower whose fate remains unknown to this day. From her uniquely qualified perspective, Philippa Gregory explores the most famous unsolved mystery, informed by impeccable research and framed by her inimitable storytelling skills. *Amazon.com*

Vreelan, Susan. *Clara and Mr. Tiffany*. 2011.

Historical fiction about Clara Driscoll, the woman who designed many of Tiffany's most celebrated early pieces. The book touches on what it was like to be a woman in the work force in the 1890's as well as information about the Tiffany family and life in NYC at that time. as well as an inside look at the Tiffany glass studio and its daily operation. *Jan McVey*

Mystery/ Suspense



Adler-Olsen, Jussi. *The Keeper of Lost Causes*. 2011. Denmark's top

crime writer makes his American debut. Copenhagen detective Carol Morck has lost his way so his boss puts him in charge of Department Q, a cold-case Siberia. There he becomes intrigued by the file of a beautiful politician lost a sea five years ago. *Booklist*

James, P.D. *Death Comes to Pemberley*. A rare meeting of literary genius: P. D. James, long among the most admired mystery writers of our time, draws the characters of Jane Austen's beloved novel *Pride and Prejudice* into a tale of murder and emotional mayhem. *Publisher*

King, Stephen. *11/22/1963*. 2011. Jake Epping is living a normal schoolteacher's life when a short-order cook named Al introduces him to a time warp hidden in a diner pantry leading directly to 11:58 a.m., September 9, 1958. Al's dying of cancer, which means he needs a successor to carry out his grand mission: kill Lee Harvey Oswald so that the 1963 JFK assassination never happens. Jake takes the plunge and finds two things he never expected: true love and the fact that the obdurate past doesn't want to change. *Booklist*

Lippman, Laura. *I'd Know You Anywhere*. Eliza Benedict seems an unexceptional suburban housewife, devoted to her husband and two children. But when she was a teenager, a terrible thing happened to her. She has tried to put the events of that time in her life behind her and focus instead on the immediate needs of her family. But then a letter arrives...and the trauma of the past is suddenly thrust into the present. Laura Lippman has written a riveting novel of psychological suspense, with much of the action set here in Howard County. *Roberta Rood*

Lippman, Laura. *The Most Dangerous Thing*. 2011. Superb storyteller Lippman continues her trenchant investigation into the malleability of memory and the unexpected ripple effect of crime in another superb stand-alone novel similar in its flashback approach to *I'd Know You Anywhere* (2010). A 40-year-old man still called Go-Go dies in a car crash. Zip back to 1976. Little Go-Go, his two older brothers, tomboy Mickey, and indulged doctor's daughter Gwen get up to mischief in the deep woods outside their small town on the fringe of Baltimore. Now stalwart husbands and fathers Sean and Tim, still feral Mickey, and trendy magazine editor and unhappily married adoptive mother Gwen fear that a toxic secret from their conspiratorial past will emerge. Lippman's riveting geometric tale of lies and guilt encompasses shrewd insights into class divides, the vicissitudes of family, and the radically altered nature of childhood. Spiked with sniper-precise humor, Lippman's wise and provocative novel of destructive choices reminds us that the greatest mystery of all is the inner lives of others. *Booklist*

Mankell, Henning. *The Troubled Man: A Kurt Wallander Novel*. 2011. As the novel opens, Kurt Wallander's daughter Linda is living with Hans von Enke, scion of one of Sweden's most distinguished military families. To Wallander's delight, Linda has recently given birth to a daughter, Klara. All seems golden – for the moment. But such moments, alas, are fleeting, in fiction as in life. Following a celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday, Hakan von Enke, a retired submarine commander and Hans's father, drops out of sight. Family, friends, former naval colleagues – all are clueless as to his whereabouts. For Linda Wallander and her father, both police officers, cluelessness is a condition that cannot be tolerated – especially when the mystery strikes so close to home. *Roberta Rood*

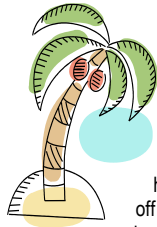
McCall Smith, Alexander. *The Saturday Big Tent Wedding Party: The New No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency Novel*. 2011. Associate Detective Grace Makutsi is set to wed Phuti Radiphute, whose family owns and runs the highly successful Double Comfort Furniture Shop in Gaborone, Botswana. But many last minute decisions must still be made. And whenever Grace Makutsi's wardrobe is concerned, shoes become a vital issue! Meanwhile the No.1 Ladies Detective Agency has ongoing cases to solve. Fortunately, Mma Ramotswa is fully up to the task. In addition, she has to help Charlie, her husband's apprentice at Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, sort out a delicate situation regarding his love life. *Roberta Rood*

McCrum, Sharon. *St. Dale*. 2005. A diverse group of stock car racing fans led by tour guide Harley Claymore, a down-and-out race car driver who yearns to be reinstated, embarks on the Number Three Pilgrimage bus tour of Southern speedways – seven states in eight days – as a tribute to legendary NASCAR champion Dale Earnhardt in this meandering road novel modeled after *The Canterbury Tales*. *Molly Kelley*

Nesbo, Jo. *Redbreast*. 2011. Detective Harry Hole embarrassed the force, and for his sins he's been reassigned to mundane surveillance tasks. But while monitoring neo-Nazi activities in Oslo, Hole is inadvertently

drawn into a mystery with deep roots in Norway's dark past, when members of the government willingly collaborated with Nazi Germany. More than sixty years later, this black mark won't wash away—and disgraced old soldiers who once survived a brutal Russian winter are being murdered, one by one. Now, with only a stained and guilty conscience to guide him, an angry, alcoholic, error-prone policeman must make his way safely past the traps and mirrors of a twisted criminal mind. For a conspiracy is taking rapid and hideous shape around Hole . . . and Norway's darkest hour may be still to come. *Amazon.com*

Nesbo, Jo. *The Snowman*. 2011. On the first day of snow, a child wakes up to find his mother has disappeared during the night. Outside, a snowman has appeared out of nowhere, the calling card of one of the most terrifying serial killers in recent fiction. A letter from the perpetrator draws Detective Hole further and further into the case, and together with his new partner, Katrine Bratt, he hunts the Snowman through twists and turns that become increasingly personal and may drive Hole to the brink of insanity. *Amazon.com*



Nonfiction

Bryson, Bill. *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*. 2010. Bill Bryson takes us on a room-by-room tour through his own house, using each room as a jumping off point into the vast history of the domestic artifacts we take for granted. As he takes us through the history of our modern comforts, Bryson demonstrates that whatever happens in the world eventually ends up in our home, in the paint, the pipes, the pillows, and every item of furniture. *Amazon.com*

Collins, Paul. *The Murder of the Century: The Gilded Age Crime That Scandalized a City and Sparked the Tabloid Wars*. 2011. In the sticky summer of 1897, New York City was rocked by the discovery of a human torso wrapped in oilcloth floating in the river. A second bundle wrapped in the same fabric was found, then a third. Who was the dead man, and where had his head been dumped? The murder terrified the populace but galvanized the newspaper tabloids. *Library Journal*

Dirda, Michael. *On Conan Doyle*. 2011. Michael Dirda, book critic for *The Washington Post*, takes us on a delightful excursion through his childhood obsession with Sherlock Holmes. (Dirda's love of Conan Doyle's fabulous creation has extended into his adulthood: He is currently a member in good standing of the Baker Street Irregulars.) One of the most fascinating revelations contained in this slender and lively volume concerns the sheer number of works by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that have nothing whatever to do with Sherlock Holmes. Not only did this prolific author pen several historical novels but he wrote tales of adventure and ghost stories as well. *Roberta Rood*

Grann, David. *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon*. 2009. In 1925, the legendary British explorer Percy Fawcett ventured into the Amazon jungle, in search of a fabled civilization. He never returned. Over the years countless perished trying to find evidence of his party and the place he called "The Lost City of Z." In this masterpiece of narrative nonfiction, journalist David Grann interweaves the spellbinding stories of Fawcett's quest for "Z" and his own journey into the deadly jungle, as he unravels the greatest exploration mystery of the twentieth century. *Amazon.com*

Hastings, Max. *Inferno: The World At War 1939-1945*. 2011. Excellent history of the war from the point of view of the citizens and soldiers affected by the war. *Pat Carson*

Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana*. 2011. Journalist Lemmon tells the moving story of Kamila Sidiqi, a young woman in Kabul, Afghanistan, who, out of desperation, started a successful dressmaking business to support her family and other destitute women during the repressive Taliban regime. *Library Journal*

Letts, Elizabeth. *The Eighty-Dollar Champion: Snowman, the Horse That Inspired a Nation*. 2011. In 1956, Harry De Leyer, a riding instructor at a Long Island girls' school, spent \$80 on a horse that was bound for the slaughterhouse. He thought the animal might make a good horse for his students. But the horse, named Snowman by Harry's four-year-old daughter, turned out to be much more a champion show-jumper. *Booklist*

Mann, Charles C. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*. 2005. Contrary to what so many Americans learn in school, the pre-Columbian Indians were not sparsely settled in a pristine wilderness; rather, there were huge numbers of Indians who actively molded and influenced the land around them. The astonishing Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan had running water and immaculately clean streets, and was larger than any contemporary European city. Indeed, Indians were not living lightly on the land but were landscaping and manipulating their world in ways that we are only now beginning to understand. *Amazon.com*

McCullough, David. *The Greater Journey: American in Paris*. 2011. David McCullough combines his love of American history with his affection for the City of Light in this fascinating compendium. Starting in the early 19th century, Americans from all walks of life traveled to Paris, some to perfect their prowess as painters; others to further their medical education or hone their literary skills. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., Samuel F.B. Morse, James Fenimore Cooper, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent – all were there, and many more besides. *Roberta Rood*

Millard, Candice. *The Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Medicine, Madness and the Murder of a President*. 2011. Millard presents a dual biography of the 20th U.S. President and his assassin. James A. Garfield and Charles Guiteau were both born into hardscrabble Midwestern circumstances. While Garfield made himself into a teacher, Union army general, congressman, and President, Guiteau, who was most likely insane, remained at the margins of life, convinced he was intended for greatness. When he failed to receive a position in Garfield's administration, he became convinced that God meant him to kill the President. *Library Journal*

Obmascik, Mark. *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*. 2011. Every January 1, a quirky crowd storms out across North America for a spectacularly competitive event called a Big Year—a grand, expensive, and occasionally vicious 365-day marathon of birdwatching. For three men in particular, 1998 would become a grueling battle for a new North American birding record. Bouncing from coast to coast on frenetic pilgrimages for once-in-a-lifetime rarities, they brave broiling deserts, bug-infested swamps, and some of the lumpiest motel mattresses known to man. *Amazon.com*